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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/926,027	08/16/2001	Tomoyasu Nakamura	212353US0PCT	1232

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EXAMINER

WONG, LESLIE A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1761


DATE MAILED: 07/03/2002

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/926,027	Applicant(s) Nakamura et al.
	Examiner Leslie Wong	Art Unit 1761



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE three MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Apr 29, 2002

2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) 9-16 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) 9-16 is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:

1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). <u>8</u>	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

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With respect to the Information Disclosure Statement submitted May 23, 2002, the reference that was crossed out was not considered as it was not related to the claimed invention.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 9-16 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. It is noted that Applicant's claims do not exclude ingestibles that are bitter, but merely dictate that other flavors must be present.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 9-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gudas et al, Cumberland Packing Corp, Catania (EP 0582396), Yusuke (JP 61120690), and Turback (WO 88/06004).

Gudas et al disclose the use of sodium gluconate in chewing gum (see entire document).

Cumberland Packing Corp discloses the use of sodium gluconate in food products (see entire document).

Catania et al disclose the addition of a salt of gluconic acid to an ingestible product (see entire document, especially page 4, lines 16-24).

Yusuke discloses the addition of gluconate to water (see abstract).

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Turback discloses the addition of calcium gluconate to seafood (see entire document , especially claim 2).

The claims differ as to the specific recitation of a flavor other than bitter.

All of the cited references contain flavors other than "bitter" as obvious components. That is, all of the food products contain other flavors such as "astringency, pungency, and sourness" as described by Applicant on page 5 of the specification.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to add a nontoxic salt of gluconic acid as taught by Gudas et al, Cumberland Packing Corp, Catania, Yusuke, and Turback to any orally ingestible product because the use of gluconic acid salts to improve flavor is conventional in the art and the salt is used for no more than its art-recognized function.

All of the claim limitations and arguments have been considered. None of them are seen as serving as basis for patentability.

No claim is allowed.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

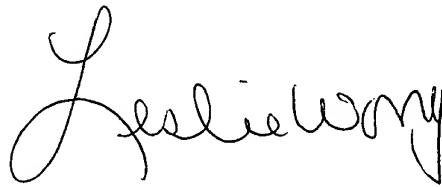
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the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leslie Wong whose telephone number is (703) 308-1979. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday.

The fax number for this Group is (703) 872-9310 for non-final responses and (703) 872-9311.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie Wong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Leslie Wong
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1761

LAW
July 2, 2002